



Entering the New Theological Space

Blurred Encounters of Faith, Politics and Community

Edited by John Reader, William Temple Foundation, University of Manchester, UK and Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford, UK, and Christopher R. Baker, William Temple Foundation, University of Manchester, UK

Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology



May 2009

256 pages

978-0-7546-6339-3

Includes 4 line drawings and 1 table

234 x 156 mm

Hardback

\$114.95

This book presents theological reflections on the changing nature of church mission and Christian identity within a theology of 'blurred encounter' - a physical, social, political and spiritual space where once solid hierarchies and patterns are giving way to more fluid and in many ways unsettling exchanges. The issues raised and dynamics explored apply to all socially-produced space, thus tending to 'blur' that most fundamental of theological categories - namely urban vs. rural theology.

Engaging in a sharper way with some of the helpful but inevitably broad-brush conclusions raised by recent church-based reports (Mission-shaped Church, Faithful Cities), the authors examine some of the practical and theological implications of this research for the issue of effective management and therefore church leadership generally. Speaking to practitioners in the field of practical theology as well as those engaged in theological and ministerial training, key voices encompass dimensions of power and conflict, and identify some of the present and future opportunities and challenges to church/faith-based engagement and leadership arising from blurred encounters.

Contributors - practitioners and theorists - cover a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary professional contexts and academic/denominational interests. Contributors include: John Atherton, John Reader, Helen Cameron, Martyn Percy, Malcolm Brown, Karen Lord, Clare McBeath and Margaret Goodall.

Contents

Introduction: entering the new space of the blurred encounter between faith, politics and community, Christopher Baker and John Reader; Mainstreaming the edges: reflections on Edinburgh's royal mile and fair trade, John Atherton; Brief engagements; processional encounters, Ian Ball; A blurred interfaith, intercultural experience: a Kidderminster story, Owain Bell; Blurred encounters in the suburbs: problems of place and problematic places, Malcolm Brown; Networks - the blurring of institutions and networks: how should the church engage?, Helen Cameron; How to see the wood for the trees: a multi-disciplinary approach to dementia, Margaret Goodall; Kent - the garden of dilemma, David Grimwood and Jane Winter; Weightless identity in post-material communities, Phillip Jones; Negotiating identity: the Christian individual and the secular institution, Karen Lord; Sanctuary and liminality: stories, reflection and liturgy exploring the blurred encounters between mental health and illness as an inner-city church, Clare McBeath; 'Betwixt and between': anthropological approaches to blurred encounters, Jonathan Miles-Watson; Baptism as cultural conversation: explorations in implicit theology, Martyn Percy; Truth in science and theology: Latour, Zizek and the theory of circulating reference, John Reader; An experience of rural ministry, Philip Wagstaff; Mapping the new theological space: from blurred encounters to thresholds of transformation, Christopher Baker and John Reader; Indexes.

About the Editor

Revd Dr John Reader has been ordained for over 30 years and has served in mainly rural parishes. He has also been Director of Pastoral Theology at a theological college as well as teaching on three non-residential training courses. Revd Dr Reader is currently Rector of the Ironstone Benefice in the Diocese of Oxford, Senior Honorary Research Fellow with the William Temple Foundation in Manchester and Senior Tutor for the Diploma in Christian Rural and Environmental Studies based at Ripon College, Cuddesdon, Oxford. His publications include *Local Theology* (1994), *Blurred Encounters* (2005) and *Reconstructing Practical Theology* (2008).

Dr Christopher R. Baker is Director of Research for the William Temple Foundation, University of Manchester, Part-time lecturer in Urban Theology at the University of Manchester, a reviewer for *Urban Studies* and *City* journals and a member of the Church of England's Urban Policy Consultative Group. He is a co-founder of the Manchester Centre for Public Theology and the Core Cities Theological Network.

ASHGATE

To order this book please visit www.ashgate.com, or email orders@ashgate.com
A 10% discount applies to orders placed through www.ashgate.com

www.ashgate.com/isbn/9780754663393

ASHGATE

To order this book please visit www.ashgate.com, or email orders@ashgate.com
A 10% discount applies to orders placed through www.ashgate.com